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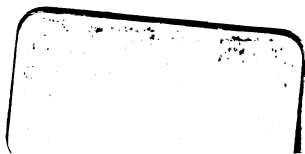
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Wm Hall

A D E F E N C E

OF THE

*with the author's
compliments*

REFORMED SYSTEM

OF

WELSH ORTHOGRAPHY:

BEING

A R E P L Y

TO

THE REV. JOHN ROBERTS'S REASONS

FOR REJECTING THE SAME,

AND FOR ADHERING TO THAT USED IN BISHOP PARRY'S EDITION OF
THE WELSH BIBLE, AND THAT OF 1630.

BY

THE REV. JOHN JONES, M. A.

PRECENTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH.

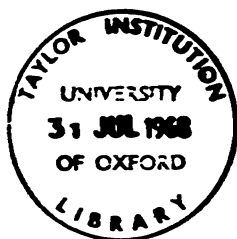
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OXFORD,

PRINTED BY S. COLLINGWOOD, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,
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MDCCCXXIX.



A D E F E N C E
OF THE
REFORMED SYSTEM
OF
WELSH ORTHOGRAPHY.

THE revival of the EISTEDDVOD has been hailed with a just enthusiasm by all classes of society connected with the principality of Wales. But amid the grandeur and display of these bardic sessions, there is some danger of the primary object of the institution being neglected. Hitherto the society has not acted up to the full expectation of the public at large,—it has not as yet published any ancient Welsh MSS. in prose or poetry; and before this is done, it will not have attained the end for which it was originally designed. It is however expected, in consequence of a meeting of several friends of the institution, held at Denbigh, immediately after the Eisteddvod in September last, that something will be done towards effecting this laudable object; and if their example be followed in other parts of the principality, and if all cooperate with the metropolitan society, we have good reason to expect that we shall yet see the valuable productions of our ancient authors brought to light, which have hitherto been neglected, to the great

disappointment of all admirers of antiquity and genius.

The Eisteddvod has not, however, been altogether inactive,—we are indebted to it for presenting us with several excellent prize compositions, both in poetry and prose; and as the subject of one of its essays, viz. that on Welsh orthography, is of peculiar interest to the Welsh writers of the present day, I have thought proper to select it for my present treatise, that I might offer a few observations upon it, and so become instrumental, if possible, in establishing the orthography of our language.

The writer opens his essay with some appropriate remarks on the general characteristics of the principality, and its inhabitants; and to judge from the description he gives of both, he appears to possess very great national feeling, which however carries him (as the late Mr. Pinkerton would have said) somewhat beyond the limits of due propriety, especially when he asserts, “Their leading characteristic
“ is the language, which they inherit from their an-
“ cestors, as a monument of their prowess and lite-
“ rary character. Its extinction, by the hostile at-
“ tempts of their enemies, has been arrested by their
“ valour in arms and national taste for literature.”
p. 1. It is remarkable however, and deserving of notice, that the Welsh, after encountering so many revolutions, should still retain their native language, and without its having suffered any material change from time immemorial.

A language like the Welsh surely cannot fail to

claim and merit the attention of the learned,—especially among the natives, even though it exhibited no other claim but its great antiquity. In every inquiry, therefore, concerning the orthography of this language, the utmost candour should be exercised,—controversial feelings entirely discarded, nor any motive be allowed to operate, but a genuine wish to decide a point of such important interest. From the unprecedented attention which the subject has lately obtained, there is encouragement to hope that the contest may be brought to a final and satisfactory determination.

It might here be suggested, that it would be highly desirable if the editors of the Welsh periodical publications were to deliver their sentiments respectively on the subject of orthography, and then agree to adopt one and the same system. This, I am firmly convinced, would be the most likely way of putting an end to many idle and malignant disputes, and also the means of creating universal harmony in the language. It is with this view, and with the hope of finally succeeding in establishing, on a firm and lasting basis, a rational system of orthography, that I now offer my observations on the present pamphlet.

It must here be premised, (and in this I have the sanction of the most approved writers of the present day,) that the standard orthography of the language should be determined upon the following principles :

First, Let the genius of the language be assumed

as the only criterion by which we may proceed in the examination of the different modes of spelling the same word; and,

Secondly, Let that mode of spelling be adopted, which, after due consideration, appears most consistent with the etymology and pronunciation of the word.

This is the only mode by which we can hope to arrive at that uniformity in orthography which all agree to be so desirable.

But, before entering upon this department, it is necessary to notice our author's great apprehension of some dangerous consequences that are likely to arise from introducing any change into the existing orthography. Among the evils which he prognosticates will be an entire change of pronunciation in the language. On this point he is very urgent, and asserts, that the advocates for the improvement of Welsh orthography have so far forgotten themselves, as to "denounce the language in the present state of orthography as unworthy of existence." p. 4.

I now hasten to examine the principal arguments in Mr. R.'s Essay, passing over many a commonplace remark, as well as those frivolous, not to say puerile passages, wherein he expresses his great anxiety for the purity of the language and the interests of the Established Church; as if, by restoring its orthography, any language was likely to be corrupted, or the interests of the Established Church in any measure impaired. If from these and similar expressions a judgment may be formed, there is rea-

son to view Mr. R. as endeavouring to place the advocates for restoring the Welsh orthography in as unfavourable a light as possible; and great as are his professions of candour and liberality of sentiment, they seem but ill exemplified in this little work.

Now, with respect to our alphabetical characters, I quite agree with Mr. R., that no change should be made in them; for although there may be several alphabets extant better suited to the genius of the language, still I should hesitate a little before I would recommend the adoption of any one of them; lest the rejecting the common alphabet should be the cause of infinitely greater evils.

It is hoped that this avowal of the propriety of adhering to the present alphabet, together with the proposal of the two canons for regulating the orthography, will be deemed a sufficient guarantee that it is not my intention to introduce any capricious or unjustifiable innovation.

I shall here present the reader with a few extracts from Mr. R.'s Essay, with my observations on them.

"One principle of our innovators," says Mr. R., "is to reject the aspirate *h*, and the double consonants." p. 9.

"The adoption," he continues, "of this sweeping principle of discarding, what are called superfluous letters, for marks, is strongly opposed by the uncouth appearance which it will give to our orthography. For such words as *èto*, *àteb*, *àtoch*, *mainc*,

“*caine, cynu, tynnu, hanner*^a, thus dressed in their
 “ new fashion, and *mwyáu, lleidu, gwagáu, gwa-*
 “ *stadáu, rhyddáu*, for *mwyháu, lleiháu, gwagháu,*
 “ *gwastadháu, rhyddháu*, greatly offend the eye till
 “ we are familiarized with them, and then our pre-
 “ sent orthography will become a nuisance and an
 “ eye-sore. Any Englishman may judge of its ef-
 “ fects in this view by parallel specimens from his
 “ own language^b, were the double consonants and
 “ the aspirate *h* expunged in such polysyllables as
 “ the following, *letter, bitter, running, stopped, up-*
 “ *hold, vehement, stronghold, withhold, &c.* and their
 “ place supplied with marks, *lèter, bìter, rùning,*
 “ *stòped, upòld, veèment, strongòld, withòld, &c.*”
 p. 13.

It is evident to all who understand any thing of English and Welsh, that the letter *h* in *uphold*, &c. forms an essential part of the syllable *hold*, and that it cannot be taken simply for an aspirate; but in *mwyháu* &c. it is an aspirate, and by no means an essential part of *au*. If *h* in *hold* be omitted, the characteristic feature of the word is destroyed, and its original meaning lost: but should it in *mwyháu* be taken as essential to the word, then *mwyháu* can no longer signify *to augment, to increase*; but its meaning must be sought from *mwy, more, greater*, and *hau*, which signifies *to strew over, to sow*. Now had

^a This word is invariably spelt *hanner*, agreeable to its etymology.

^b What has the English orthography to do with it? Etymology settles it in Welsh.

the letter *h* been discarded from words like the following, viz. *anhardd*, *anhawdd*, *adhaer*, *borehun*, *gwehelyth*, &c. where the *h* forms as essential a part of each word as it does in *hold*, then might Mr. R. with great reason come forward and expose such an unwarrantable proceeding, and doubtless would be more successful than in his present attempt.

Since the etymology both of verbs infinitive ending in *au*, and of certain ^c nouns, is far more perceptible without the aspirate *h*, the question to be settled is, whether *h* may or may not be dispensed with and ejected from such verbs and nouns whose etymology does not warrant its insertion? There are instances of its omission under the old system, as in the following verbs, viz. *arwyddocáu*, *coffáu*, *gwartháu*, *iacháu*, *llacáu*, *llesgáu*, *llipáu*, *nacáu*, *nesáu*, *tristáu*, &c.

I cannot avoid thinking that the system of orthography would be much simplified, and more uniform and consistent, were the *h* entirely rejected, as in the above verbs, and as in *cyffroi*, *deffroi*, *osgoi*, *parotoi*, &c. which have the accent on the last syllable, like the verbs ending in *au*; but, since the accent requires a very strong aspiration, it would be better perhaps to continue, when necessary, the subsidiary *h*.

It is to be considered in the next place, whether the first syllable in *èto*, *àteb*, *àtoch*, &c. should have

^c As *cededlu*, *cededloedd*, from *cededl*; *breninoedd* from *brenin*, and the like; where the roots *cededl*, *brenin*, do not warrant such reading as *cenhedlu*, *cenhedloedd*, *brenhinoedd*.



a mark over it to denote the place of the accent; and my opinion, like that of Mr. R., is decidedly against it, not so much from its "uncouth appearance," but because it is superfluous and unnecessary: for it is obvious to all where the accent should be placed without the assistance of such a mark. But here there are two important questions to be solved, viz. Why should the words be spelt with a single *t*? Would they not sound better with two *t*'s? The first question is easily answered on the principle of etymology: for if the etymology of the words will admit of two *t*'s, or even more, they should remain unmolested; in tracing, for instance, the word *ateb* to its root, we find it cannot have two *t*'s, it being compounded of *ad* and *eb*; and one *t*, it must be allowed, is sufficient to harden a single *d*, and to become its representative. The same may be said of *atoch*, &c.; and of *cytundeb*, compounded of *cyd* and *undeb*, and sometimes written *cydundeb*. This observation will also serve to shew that the following infinitives should have only one *t*; viz. *bwyta*, *coeta*, *diota*, *llymeitia*, *pysgota*, &c. from *bwyd*, *coed*, *diawd*, *llymaid*, &c.; also *gwreica*, from *gwraig*, where *g* is hardened, or changed, into *c*. Under this rule are to be included the following adjectives of the comparative and superlative degrees, viz. *hynotach*, *hynotaf*, from *hynod*; *trugarocach*, *trugarocaf*, from *trugarawg*. In answer to the second query I acknowledge, that I cannot perceive any difference of sound between one *t*, two *t*'s, or even three *t*'s, when together.

It must be further observed, that when two *d*'s come together, as in *attethawl*, *dattodiad* from *ad* and *dethawl*, *dad* and *dodiad*, each of them is changed into *t*; and frequently also the preposition *ad* preceding a *t*, and other consonants, is changed into *at*, as in *attwf*, *attyb*, *atchwedl*, *atfod*, *atgrymu*, &c.; also *dad* is changed into *dat* in the same way in *datguddiad*.

It has been my endeavour to be as brief as possible in my observations on the above words, lest I should trespass too much on the patience of the reader; and it is with much reluctance that I proceed to expose other equally futile arguments advanced by Mr. R.: and this I do from a sense of duty that I owe to the literature of my country, and not from any predilection for the task.

Mr. R., speaking of the accents, has the following extraordinary passage, which is here presented to the reader, and left for him to judge of its merit.

“ In works professedly designed as a standard of
 “ the new system, I observe, that the accent is
 “ oftener wanting than introduced to serve this dis-
 “ tinctive office of the consonant. Hence I must
 “ infer, that the use of marks for this purpose is not
 “ so convenient to the printer as that of consonants
 “ in the straight forward execution of his work.
 “ And certainly in writing, it must greatly impede
 “ expedition, as being at variance with that rule in
 “ penmanship which forbids the pen to be taken
 “ from the paper till the word is finished. It is
 “ much less trouble to proceed with the penning of

“ two letters, than to stop in the midst to introduce
“ the accent.” p. 12.

I shall now meet the charge which Mr. R. brings against the advocates of the improved orthography. He states, that one of their principles “ is to reject
“ the double consonants;” and which I certainly allow to be partly, but not altogether the case: for those consonants, and those only, they reject, which the etymology of the words does not countenance or admit; as in *pennaeth*, for instance, where it is evident one of the *n*’s is redundant,—the word being compounded of *pen* and the termination *aeth*.

This observation is equally applicable to *bronydd*, *calonnau*, *pennau*, *trigfannau*, &c. which in the same manner require only one *n*, as *bronydd*, *calonau*, &c. the plural of *bron*, *calon*, &c. But in *chwennychiad*, *dannedd*, *meddiannau*, *tannau*, &c. two *n*’s are indispensable from the nature of the words, which are derived from *chwant*, *dant*, *meddiant*, *tant*, and the second *n* supplies the place of *t*; on this principle, if two *n*’s be suffered to remain in *pennaeth*, we should no longer have to seek for its root in *pen*, but in *pent*, as *aeth* is only a termination. But words like the following should be written with two *n*’s, viz. *annoeth*, *cynnal*, *cynnwys* &c. being compounded of *an-doeth*, *cyd-dal*, *cyd-dwys*. Now it is evident that Mr. R. must either be a perfect stranger to this principle of orthography, or must have wilfully misrepresented it, otherwise he would not have introduced *tannau* (the plural of *tant*) and likewise *hanner*, as being spelt according to the new

orthography, *tanau*, *haner*; and then gravely ask,
 “ Will not this *tannau*, (strings of an instrument,)”
 “ written *tanau*, be confounded with *tanau*, (fires)?”

Mr. R. contends on the authority of a rule which he found in Mavor’s *Spelling Book*, that “ all mono-
 “ syllables ending in a consonant with a single vowel
 “ before it, double that consonant in derivatives, as
 “ in *sin*, *sinner*, *ship*, *shipping* :” and accordingly he maintains that *pen* will make *pennau*; *tor*, *torri*; *ton*, *tonnau*, &c. Then by the same rule *mór* will make *morroedd*; *tân*, *tannau*; *tôn*, *tonnau*.

The other rule which Mr. R. quotes from the same *Spelling Book*, is the following, “ All words of
 “ more than one syllable ending in a consonant, and
 “ accented on the last syllable, double that consonant
 “ in derivatives, as *commit*, *committee*, *compel*, *com-*
 “ *pelled*.” Unfortunately, however, for Mr. R., all words of two or more syllables in Welsh have the accent on the penultima, and not on the last syllable, with the exception of verbs ending in *au*, *oi*; as *glanhâu*, *mwynhâu*, *cyffroi*, *ymdroi*, &c. *esmwythâu*, *trugarhâu*, &c. and also nouns ending in *ad*; as *glanhád*, *parhád*, *esmwythád*, which have the accent always on the last syllable. This being the case, what can be more absurd than to apply the orthographical rules of one language to another, utterly distinct in its genius and grammatical construction?

But there is another rule introduced by Mr. R. from another *Spelling Book* which must be noticed, viz. “ A single consonant between two vowels, must

“ be joined to the latter syllable, as *be-have, de-sire, re-main, ta-cit, ge-neral, mi-sery,*” &c. p. 11.

No great penetration is necessary to see the folly of attempting to hamper any language with grammatical rules which are inapplicable and foreign to its genius; as the following remarks will shew. In the Welsh language dissyllables have the accent on the first syllable, and words of three or more syllables have it invariably on the penultima; except, as has been already observed, verbs ending in *au, oi,* and nouns ending in *ad*.

Now if Mr. R. had studied his native language well, he never would have had recourse to English Spelling Books to assist him in Welsh orthography; and had he understood the above simple rules, he would not have been liable to such mistakes.

Agreeably to what has been here advanced, the following words, *brenin, penau, boneddig, trugarawg,* and the like; also, *eto, ateb, atoch,* &c. are to be pronounced brèn-in, not bre-nin; pèn-au, not pe-nau; bonèdd-ig, not bone-ddig; trugàr-awg, not truga-rawg; et-o, not e-to; at-eb, not a-teb; at-och, not a-toch.

It is moreover a well known and established principle in the language, that as the word increases in number of syllables, the accent will accordingly advance forward, and invariably rest on the last syllable but one: for example,

pèrchen
perchènawg
perchenògaeth
perchenogàethau

I cannot dismiss this point without making one observation, which is, that Mr. R. will have *perchenawg* spelt with two *n*'s, in order, as he maintains, to denote, as well as to preserve the place of, the accent; but *perchenogaeth* he spells with one *n*, inasmuch as the accent is no longer on *en*, but on *og*; if therefore the accent is now on *og*, as it undoubtedly is, why is not *g* doubled for the very same reason as *n* was doubled when the accent was on *en*?

Again, In reply to Mr. R.'s question—"How can words of *different acceptation* as well as pronunciation be distinguished, if our present use of double consonants in this respect is discontinued?" p. 11. I should say, certainly by the context, precisely in the same manner as in English, for instance, the verbs to *conduct*, *contrast*, *contract*, &c. and the substantives *conduct*, *contrast*, *contract*, are distinguished from each other; for it is the sense of the context that determines the power of the word, and not a load of cumbrous consonants; therefore to each of the following queries proposed by Mr. R., I return a negative answer.

"Will not these words	if thus written	be confounded with
<i>Cannu</i> , to bleach,	<i>canu</i> ,	<i>canu</i> , to sing.
<i>Genni</i> , to be contained,	<i>geni</i> ,	<i>geni</i> , to be born.
<i>Honni</i> , to assert,	<i>honi</i> ,	<i>honi</i> , a feminine pronoun.
<i>Honno</i> , a feminine pronoun,	<i>hono</i> ,	<i>hono</i> , a masculine pronoun."
&c. &c.		&c. &c.



It has been already observed how the second *n* supplied the place of *t*, in words like *dannedd*, *tannau*, the plurals of *dant*, *tant*; now if the second *n* stands for another consonant, as it certainly does,

then for that reason, as well as for the sake of preserving a consistency in the orthography of the language, I should omit it in *cannu*, *genni*, *honni*, &c. since, from the etymology of the words it is clearly not required.

When it is maintained that by its insertion it will greatly assist in the true pronunciation, (the only use that can be assigned to it,) I should dissent, grounding my assertion on the rules laid down concerning pronunciation. Besides, by throwing away the redundant *n*, we have at once a regular and uniform system of orthography, founded on the genius of the language.

It is further urged, that without doubling the consonants, the words in the above list might be mistaken one for the other, and that it would be desirable to have some visible distinction made between them, independent of that which we gain from the sense of the several passages where they occur. In answer to this I would suggest, that nothing can be more simple than the use of a grave accent placed over the vowel in the first syllable, as *cànu*, *gèni*, *hòni*, &c. which would prevent the possibility of a mistake. This mode of writing, I am proud to observe, has, since the time Mr. R. first published his Essay, been almost universally adopted.

Now while I am writing about the accents, I trust it will not be unacceptable to the reader if I enter a little more fully into that subject. It being ascertained that in the Welsh language by far the greater number of monosyllables are long, some of the

most skilled in the language are of opinion that the short words should be distinguished with a grave accent; as *màn*, a place, or spot; *glàn*, a brink, or side; *càn* or *gàn*, by, &c. and leave the long unaccented, as *llev*, *nev*, *llid*, *man*, (small); *glan*, (pure, or fair); *can*, (a song); &c. And also lay down this additional rule, which though not essential, may yet be convenient: viz. Let the *a* answering to *that* have a grave accent over it; as *à*.

a as a verbal agent answering to *will* and *did* have an acute accent; as *á*.

a answering to *with* have a circumflexed accent; as *â*.

a answering to *and* have no accent.

But in case the above plan is not approved of and followed, I would suggest a slight improvement in the present received method; I would retain the circumflex over the long vowel, as in *mân*, *glân*, *cân*, and omit the grave accent in their corresponding short vowels *man*, *glan*, *can*, &c. I would also omit the circumflex in *llev*, *nev*, *llid*, and the like, since they have no short words corresponding to them, that is, spelt in the same manner and bearing a different signification.

The prefixes *di*, *dy*, and the privative particle *an*, and the preposition *yn*, will next be considered.

I perfectly agree with Mr. R., that *di* is used both as a negative and affirmative prefix; but at the same time it is my opinion, that *dy*, and not *di*, should be adopted as a prefix affirmative; inasmuch as this mode of writing the language would be pro-

ductive of regularity and uniformity. The manner however in which Mr. R. treats this subject is very far from being satisfactory ; especially when he states that “ the proposed alteration cannot be made “ without altering the signification of the com-
 “ pounds. If *dy* be adopted, as our innovators de-
 “ sire, how can it be distinguished from the posses-
 “ sive pronoun *dy*, thy ; or the force of its signifi-
 “ cation as a pronoun be avoided upon words com-
 “ pounded with it. Such a word as *dioddef*, suffer,
 “ if written *dyoddef*, will signify the tolerating of
 “ thee, and *dyoddefiadau*, thy sufferings, and thy
 “ sufferances.” p. 16. The passage that follows this is equally gross and absurd, and therefore I shall not introduce it here ; but simply ask Mr. R., if he knows whether Dr. Davies intended *dy* for a prefix affirmative, or a pronoun, in these words copied from his (Dr. D.’s) Dictionary ; *dychrynu*, *dychyfarfod*, *dychyfyd*, *dyfrysio*, *dyfysgi*, *dyhynt*, *dyundeb*, &c.? Is it not evident that *dy* in all these places is a prefix, and not a pronoun ? and who has ever heard of the pronoun *dy* being prefixed to nouns or verbs in the sense Mr. R. here insists upon ? Indeed it would have been but honourable in Mr. R. to have discussed the subject fairly and impartially ; for, according to his hypothesis, *dychrynu* signifies “ to “ frighten thee,” and so of the rest !

With respect to the particle *an* : it is immaterial, according to my idea of things, whether it be inflected to *am* in composition, as *ammharawd* ; or not inflected, as *anmharawd* ; for both are right ; as

in Latin *adnotatio* is used for *annotatio*, &c. &c. It is also in certain cases inflected into *af*, as *aflwyddiant*, *aflonydd*.

Nevertheless, with respect to the preposition *yn*, I am decidedly of opinion that it should not, except in poetry, be changed into *ym*, *yg*, before words beginning with *m*, *ng*, as “Heddwch *ym* Mhrydain:”—“Llawnder *yg* Nghymmru.”

There is one more observation which I wish to make, viz. that with respect to the substantive verb *sy* or *sydd*, answering to *ἐστὶ* and *ἐστὶν* in Greek, I would strongly recommend to continue the custom of writing *sy* before a consonant, as “Pwy *sy* draw?” and *sydd* before a vowel, as “Pwy *sydd* acw?” Also *sydd* when it is followed by a punctuation, as “Y “*sydd*, y fydd ac a fu.”

In concluding, I would earnestly submit to my countrymen in general, and the clergy more particularly, the propriety of cultivating an intimate acquaintance with the subject of this pamphlet; for I am perfectly convinced that as long as this is neglected, we cannot expect to see harmony of orthography in our Welsh Bibles, or in any other publication in the Welsh language. It is with pleasure, however, I witness that the system which I have now advocated is daily gaining ground, and no higher proof can be required, than to observe what orthography is now adopted in almost all the works issuing from the Welsh press. This circumstance alone speaks volumes, whilst it animates me with

the strongest hopes that in a very short time ignorance must yield to knowledge, and inveterate prejudices give way to conviction. It was indeed with the view of effecting this desirable consummation that I undertook to write my present Defence, as well as a Welsh Essay on the same subject. And if I have in any way contributed towards establishing a consistent uniform orthography, founded on good and rational grounds, according with the genius of the language, I shall think that I have done some service to the literature of my native country; for the welfare of which I am bound by the strongest possible ties ever to use my utmost exertions.

THE END.

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